

# 11. ABNORMAL COLORATION IN THE BANDED KRAIT, *BUNGARUS FASCIATUS* (SCHNEIDER)

(With a plate)

A specimen of Banded Krait (*Bungarus fasciatus*), purchased from Calcutta (location of capture given as 'near Calcutta'), female 1250 mm. long, was abnormally coloured in that, except for two near the tail, the typical transverse bars were absent. Instead, the black pigment was arranged in an irregular wavy line the whole length of the body and tail, covering most of the dorsum. At a few points the black coloration appears to begin cross bands but nowhere meets the ventrals except as mentioned earlier. Head pattern and scalation same as average *B. fasciatus*. Scalation: Dorsal 15 rows; ventrals 226; caudals 26. The specimen was gravid and en route to Bombay deposited twelve eggs in the bag on April 3. Six of these eggs spoiled some days later, the remaining six were incubated and hatched on June 5. All six young were marked as described above, none with more than two complete bands. Average length 255 mm. Scalation did not differ from normal. No mention of this aberration is made by Wall or Malcolm Smith; it corresponds to the not uncommon variation of other banded snakes (as *Lampropeltis*) which are normally banded, but which sometimes have a line, lines, or band running the length of its body. The venom-extraction officer of Haffkine Institute, Mr. N. E. Vad, says that though he had never seen one, he has heard of specimens from Assam and Burma of this pattern-type.

All snakes were kept for over a month, after which four were released, one is preserved, with a normal juvenile *B. fasciatus* at the Bombay Natural History Society's collection. The photograph illustrates both normal and aberrant forms of *Bungarus fasciatus* (juveniles).

C/o K. CHATTOPADHYAYA,  
6, CHATEAU MARINE,  
MARINE DRIVE,  
BOMBAY,  
December 1, 1968.

ROMULUS WHITAKER